

# New Blouses Herald Unusual Move in Style

BY ANNE RITTEHOUSE.

THERE is a turn in the tide of clothes this week. It is an astounding fact that the trade considers Christmas week as the time to end winter and the New Year as the time to begin a new type of apparel.

This is very well for commerce, but it is perplexing for the woman. She realizes that winter has just begun, not only on the calendar, but in fact. Furs are needed every day, instead of occasionally. Warm clothes are essential. Hats that resist the wind are the only comfortable ones. Heavy shoes must replace paper soles and steel buckles. To the mind of woman, winter has arrived; to the mind of apparel workers, spring appears over the horizon.

The situation really sounds more perplexing than it is. The fact is that the trade must be ready for seasonal clothes three months before the season begins. It cannot wait until the last hour. The great machinery which belongs to the industry of preparing apparel for women must be set in motion the moment the New Year breaks against the time when the frost will melt.

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It takes months to prepare to fight a battle in clothes. The extremists go to Paris in November, come back in December, and launch spring and summer clothes in January. These are the manufacturers. They work close to the French houses. They use models in mass. They obtain a collar from one, a belt from another, an advance silhouette. Then they are ready for the American trade.

As a rule, the houses in France do more business with the manufacturers than with private dressmakers, and here is where the smile is justified on the face of the American. The French designers, you know, raise a hullabaloo about cards of admission to their salons, about the necessity for royalties on creations, the barring out of journalists and those who do not buy; in short, they make it as difficult as possible to enter any one of their houses. The peace conference was easier of admission than the August French exhibitions of clothes. Yet any manufacturer who wishes to sell a hundred or more gowns at small cost to the American public, flooding the continent with them at one-fifth the price asked in Paris, can go into any one of these French dressmaking houses and buy what he will. Why then, the exclusiveness?

And another strange part of the game is that a large number of these manufacturers claim to put out purely American clothes, whereas they are frequently in Paris or in touch with their commissioners there.

What is true is this: The ideas obtained abroad are used separately or blended by the manufacturers to bring about an American product suitable for the American woman; not only her face and figure, but her activities, her method of living, her point of view and her social opportunities.

So it is this part of the trade that produces its spring clothes after the first of the year and starts the world of apparel moving toward new contours, hats, wraps and sport clothes at the moment when the clothes purchased in the autumn are getting their first linings.

It is not only that entirely new gowns and new ideas for street and evening clothes are produced, but there seems to be a shift in the way of dressing. Furs are withdrawn, except at sales, and blouses are offered. Thin coat suits take the place of heavy one-piece frocks. Even those women who are busy trying to get service out of their warm clothes catch the inspiration of the hour and think about dress in different terms. They wonder if it isn't possible to turn their wardrobe into new lines; if it isn't probable that a few old things will serve with the addition of new ones.

There is a large class of women in America who wear out their old clothes in the autumn and buy their spring apparel in January, thereby avoiding an actual winter outfit, merely adding a top coat and furs. These are the women who are economical of time as well as money and who insist that their plan is the best. It sounds good, has reason behind it, and should appeal to a larger majority of women than it does.

It may be that in the future the American creed of dressing will be based on this suggestion. It is no more of a revolution than was the general adoption of one type of underwear for twelve months of the year. If your memory does not go back very far, it may be aided by your living ancestors, who will tell you that in their day all women considered it necessary to change the weight of their underclothes, also the

They Point the Way to the Revival of a Fashion of 1895, Which Was Invented to Shelve the One-Piece Frock—Fine Workmanship and Gorgeous Colors—Short Sleeves and High Collars.



THE BLOUSE ON THE LEFT IS SOMEWHAT ON THE ORDER OF A SACQUE WITH SHORT SLEEVES AND HIGH TURN-OVER COLLAR. THE EDGES ARE FINISHED WITH NARROW RUFFLES, THERE IS A BLACK LEATHER BELT AND SMALL GOLD BUTTONS. THE COLOR IS ORANGE; THE FABRIC, TAFFETA. AT RIGHT: BLOUSE OF BRONZE SILK NET WORN OVER A BROWN SILK SHIRT. IT IS TRIMMED WITH FLOUNCES OF FINE CREAM LACE AND TIED ABOUT THE WAIST WITH A NARROW BELT OF BRONZE VELVET RIBBON. THE DEEP PLEATED COLLAR IS A SLIGHT EVIDENCE OF THE RETURN OF THE BERTHA WHICH WAS EXPECTED.

plague better than men, and that, class to class, those who wear few clothes suffer less from colds, are not tubercular and are not among those who fill the hospitals for throat and nose operations.

All of this is important and significant, this business of health and its influence over fashions, and if women have the doctor's permission and approval in regard to thin clothes, they will indulge in them more than ever.

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The dressmakers need not fear. Women will always purchase garment as long as they have the money for it. The question as to whether it is thick or thin is of no importance. Although women are beginning to dress in much the same manner all the year around, except in the very hot months, they do not reduce their purchases. The reason for women buying clothes is not necessity; it is the demand for change. Monotony has sent many people to the asylum. That is proved by statistics; it is not a mere theory. The women who have the least monotony in their lives are apt to be the least

melancholy. A change of clothes is a stimulant to women's minds.

Taking all these things into consideration, the fact that the dressmakers and manufacturers are offering thin clothes with the first snows of January should not dis-

a demand for new blouses and a supply of them at the shops. These are entitled, through their originality, to persuade the public into buying them.

Such blouses have appeared this month. They are intended for separate skirts as well as coat suits, for the economical idea of using a separate skirt is abroad in the land; in truth, it is strongly entrenched.

Far back in 1895 there was a widespread fashion to wear separate skirts with ornamental blouses and the costume was considered sufficiently formal for the gayest of afternoon affairs and even for small dinners and the theater. Yet so subtly does each generation change its creed of clothes that the costume of today which is made up of the separate skirt and the blouse has not the remotest kinship to the costume of 1895.

A description of one seems to fit the other, but it is misleading. The costume of '95 was made up from a long skirt with a train effect at the back, the material crepe de chine, satin or figured crepon; the blouse was of taffeta, of embroidered tulle or spangled net. This was the generation that sponsored the small waist and the curved hips, so the ornamental bodice was boned to a deep point front and back.

Today this costume consists of a short skirt, cut from six to twelve inches from the floor, made of tweed, serge, satin or homespun, and a blouse that is dropped over a soft china silk lining that does not touch the figure after it leaves the shoulders and is tied around the hips, usually with a sash.

The contour of '95 was stiff and formal, yet, according to natural laws, as far as the curves of the figure were concerned, the contour of today is as supple as that of a young Indian, all the curves smoothed out, the straight lines deprived of rigidity.

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Get it well fixed in your minds that the new blouse which is offered to build up the wardrobe between now and spring is not a simple garment, not one that can go to the tub or be worn with any kind of coat or skirt. On the contrary, it is a garment de luxe. It is intended to be the most ornamental part of the costume. It is so expensive that no woman would spend so much money on a garment that was negligible.

The bulk of the money for the costume is put in the blouse, and the skirt becomes the insignificant choice. You must admit that this is a reversal of our point of view toward dress. It is really medieval to think of the tunic as the foundation for glory and the lower garment as something to keep the legs warm. The men of several centuries before the directoire period who brought in the ineroables, the unbelievables, with their long trousers caught under the instep, thought more of the tunic, the blouse, the jerkin than any other part of the costume, so the great embroiderers of France, England and Italy exhausted their skill on the handwork that went to make this top garment a thing of beauty.

No such handwork exists today, although we have reached a degree of skill that, the people of ten years ago thought impossible. It is marvelous how well we do it when it is done so quickly, for speed is the keynote of modern labor.

It is a temptation to depart from the subject of blouses and tell something of this rejuvenation of exquisite handwork, for it is a remarkable development in American artistry; but the blouses that we may choose this month are a bit more serviceable than the gorgeous affairs that the handworkers are trying to develop. Therefore, they are worthy of a detailed description. Their glorious sisters can go for another day.

One of these new blouses, for instance, is of pink duvetyn, ornamented with gray angora. That must give you an instant impression of the novelty of this new upper garment. There is nothing commonplace about such a color or material, and if it is taken as a straw that shows the wind we are in for a gale of novelties that will upset all tradition about blouses. It is a sport blouse, this garment.

One especially charming evening wrap is made of ruby velvet and trimmed with priceless sable.

A black velvet opera gown is draped with beautiful black lace and has a train edged with monkey fur.

Blouse sleeves are generally of elbow length, but they vary from extreme shortness to great length.

One of the latest models of the supine sweater clings to the figure at the top and flares at the bottom.

Parrot green is the color of the moment.

Batiste designing seems to be fixed in favor.